

Rowlands Gill Primary School

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Dear Parent/Carer,

Re: Coronavirus

Although I have had no further updates from the local authority or the DFE with regard to Coronavirus and school closure, I know that some of you have queries or concerns which I hope to offer some clarification for.

As a school, we have increased handwashing as of today, to include on entry to school, after playtime, after PE and on exit. We had already applied handwashing before eating, after visits to the toilet and after sneezing and enjoyed 2 assemblies about the importance of handwashing and how to do it effectively. In Early Years, we have removed snack café which the children could access at any time and will now have a dedicated snack time following handwashing; we have closed the sand for now; the water tray is cleaned every night and fresh playdough is being made every day.

Some children are finding they have dry / irritated skin on their hands because of the increase in washing. If this is the case, please feel free to send hand cream in for your child to use in school after they have washed their hands. It will be made clear to the children that it can only be used on themselves and not shared with others. This should be labelled clearly with your child's name.

The Department for Education has produced guidance today about what to do if a child becomes unwell with Coronavirus symptoms while in school. Our first aider will accompany the child to our designated first aid room, close the door and open the window. They will call the office and request Mrs Rowell to phone for the child's first emergency contact to come to collect the child and the stay at home guidance will need to be applied. The DFE 'Guidance for Education Settings' cleaning procedure will then be followed.

If a member of staff becomes ill with the relevant symptoms while on site, they will be asked to leave immediately and the relevant area will be vacated until it can be thoroughly cleaned in accordance with guidance and the children will carry out thorough handwashing. The staff member will be required to follow the stay at home advice.

Some children and families in our school have already self-isolated because they are concerned that they may have the symptoms of Coronavirus. A couple of other children have been isolated by their parents because they have on-going medical conditions which make them more vulnerable to the effects of the virus.

Where we have been informed that a child is in isolation because of potential symptoms, we are applying the 7-day rule and the parents have been informed that the child must not return to school within 7 days, even if their symptoms seem to improve. Mrs Rowell is monitoring this. Siblings are able to attend school, because at this time, there is no guidance which states that households should go into isolation. If this is advised by the Government at a later date, then we will apply the same 7-day rule to anyone in the family.



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Parents of children who are in isolation have requested work to be completed at home. We will endeavour to provide small packs of work, but this will not always be available on the same day as the request is made and arrangements will need to be made by parents to collect this. While we are in school and teaching, the class work which is happening relies upon the input from the teacher at the start of the lesson (and often throughout the lesson) for the child to be able to complete the work. I'm pleased to say, that it isn't a simple case of printing out an extra copy of a worksheet, there is a lot more goes into our lessons than that!

We are anticipating that at some point in the future, we will be advised to close by the Government BUT there is no indication at all of this at the moment. To that end, staff are collating home learning packs which can be sent out with the children, if needs be. The home learning packs will be tasks and activities appropriate to the age group of the children and will be related to future topics or will be revision of things already taught. Some of the activities will be online activities and we will continue to update home learning via the school website or eSchools, if the closures are for a sustained period. Please check that you have pens, pencils, rubbers etc available at home to be able to complete home learning, and if you don't, please contact school and let us know so that we can arrange to send home these items, if we need to send home learning packs.

There are many educational websites who are offering free access for parents to print resources themselves, however I would advise parents to exercise caution if using these because they are not always pitched appropriately. Just because it says 'year 3' it doesn't mean that any child from any year 3 class will be able to complete it. I will circulate details of such websites in due course.

I would also request that any parents of Year 6 children do not give them old SATs papers to practise. We use previous papers as part of our own assessment system to help us to identify gaps in knowledge and where to provide targeted support, so practising old papers is a hindrance rather than a help. Where SATS revision is useful, Mr Bell and Mrs Readshaw will provide or point you in the direction of resources to use, which won't compromise our system.

If your child is ill, remember there is no expectation for them to complete any work. The priority is for them to rest up and become well again.

This situation is completely unique and much remains uncertain in terms of school closure. There is lots of speculation; many experts with opinions and other countries taking different measures. As a school, we are completely led by the Government; Department for Education (DFE); Public Health England and Gateshead local authority. I await daily updates to advise me of what to do and will follow any directive given. It is always my priority to inform you as quickly as I can of any changes which I may need to make.

All updates and information will be circulated to you from the school via eSchools and the school website. Please ensure that if you have recently updated your email address or phone number, you inform the office so that we know that we can communicate with you effectively should any closure occur. Remember, until we're told differently, it's business as usual.

If you have any queries, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours faithfully,



Mrs L. Clarke